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Reconciling Care and Control: Authority in Classroom Relationships

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One of the central ethical tensions that novice teachers face is how to care for their students while establishing and maintaining control. The author portrays one student teacher's intentions to care and control, analyzes the student teacher's caring actions, and proposes that teacher educators and prospective teachers have a responsibility to understand the tensions and connections of caring and controlling. He describes some constraints on student teachers' power to care, examines how legitimate authority is established, and concludes with a commentary about the ethical responsibilities of teacher educators.

In several recent studies, teachers with varying levels of experience remarked that caring for students was a central feature of their desire to teach (Kleinsasser, 1989; Linkous, 1989; McLaughlin, in press; Prillaman, 1988). Teacher educators, however, have spent little time determining what it means to care for students. Noddings (1984, 1986) has called for an ethic of caring in teaching and has focused on the need for *fidelity*, defined not as a duty bound to law or principle but as a willingness to be "reflectively faithful to someone or something" (p. 496). In an ethic of caring, fidelity is a way of relating to students "that supports affection and steadfastly promotes both the welfare of the other and that of the relation" (p. 497).

Such fidelity is established and nurtured through acts of caring for students. Noddings (1986) noted four ways in which teachers enact caring: the modeling of caring actions, dialogue with students, practice in the classroom, and confirmation of students. Teachers confirm students by acknowledging their growth and ascribing good motives to their actions, as they insist that students strive to do their best. Doing one's best is not only an individual enterprise. Confirmation of students includes the social goal of teaching

students how to care for others, as part of building a caring community.

Establishing caring relationships with students is a challenge for all teachers, especially for novice teachers. Their attempts to care may conflict with their hope of assuming an authoritative professional stance. Problems in classroom control force them to reconsider what it means to care for students.

A number of researchers have examined student teachers' efforts to maintain control in the classroom. Overwhelmingly, researchers of student teacher socialization have found that novice teachers tend to become increasingly custodial or controlling of students' behavior (Goodman, 1985; Hoy, 1969; Hoy & Rees, 1977; Silvernail & Costello, 1983; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Many researchers have posited that this increase in controlling results from student teachers' desire to make it through by settling for what works in the short term (Gaskell, 1975; Gibson, 1976; Iannaccone, 1963; Petty & Hogben, 1980; Popkewitz, Tabachnick, & Zeichner, 1979). Sitter (1982) found that elementary student teachers considered themselves to be junior partners in the classroom. Their main goal was to prove themselves capable of assuming leadership there. In another study, secondary student teachers in language arts asserted that their primary aim as student teachers was ownership of the classroom (Kleinsasser, 1989). Being both student and teacher, they felt the need to establish

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themselves—to control the environment and their students' behavior—more than they felt the need to learn about better ways to teach.

Researchers of student teacher socialization have focused on student teachers' need to control and have tended to ignore their desire to care. Studies by Goodman (1988) and Prillaman (1988), however, demonstrated that student teachers wanted to continue caring amid the travails of student teaching. One reason why student teachers in those studies maintained their ideals of caring may be because novices' prior images and ideals are powerful and resistant to change. In their study of 13 student teachers in an elementary education program, Tabachnick and Zeichner (1984) concluded that "student teaching did not result in a homogenization of teacher perspectives" (p. 33). In fact, the student teachers' perspectives on teaching generally did not change during student teaching. Long-held beliefs that teaching involves acts of caring do not simply dissolve in the course of trying to control in the classroom.

A second reason why students hold on to their initial ideals may be because they take an active role in their socialization into teaching. In a recent literature review of socialization studies, Zeichner and Gore (1990) challenged current understandings of the term *socialization*. They argued that socialization is a concept that usually describes something done to someone; it connotes an unwitting reproduction of a structured social order. Giddens (1979) has spoken forcefully against such a functionalist view of socialization, which disempowers the actor. Giddens rejected the notion that "reciprocal sets of expectations (structured as roles) control the activities of actors in processes of interactions" (p. 86). He asserted that the norms of social interaction "have at every moment to be sustained and reproduced in the flow of social encounters" (p. 86). For student teachers, one key aspect of socialization involves the tension between their desire to care and their hope to be in control during social encounters in classrooms. Before exploring that tension as one student teacher experienced it, I will describe my methodology.

Method

For this article I spotlight one participant from my interpretive study of three student teachers (McLaughlin, in press), because she clearly expressed the struggles to create and maintain relationships with her students. Kerry (a pseudonym) was chosen for the study because of her gender, socioeconomic status, and age (she was a young, female undergraduate from the middle class) and her interest in the research project. The other two participants were also young women, though they differed from Kerry in their socioeconomic status or ethnic group.

The research process was flexible, in keeping with an interpretive study that explored intention and action. I never spoke directly about caring or controlling but instead used the student teachers' language to shape interview questions. I used three data sources: observations, discourse, and documents.

Observations of student teaching took place during a 10-week period in the spring. Though I was not a university supervisor, by observing and conversing with Kerry I also acted as a participant-observer in her student teaching experience. This research posture was necessary because I wanted to study her actions within the flow of classroom encounters (through direct observation) and her recollections and intentions (through interviews).

I observed Kerry's teaching seven times. Each observation lasted 1-2 hours and was followed by an interview. Observational field notes included descriptions of verbal interactions, behavior, and the physical environment. The field notes served as a reference during the subsequent interviews, in which Kerry discussed classroom events and her uncertainties while teaching.

Discourse included group and individual interviews and informal conversation. During the fall of 1988 I conducted an introductory personal interview with Kerry and the other participants in the study. Each participant responded to the same questions in this structured interview. I asked about Kerry's biography, her reasons for becoming a teacher, and how she might react to possible problems she foresaw in student teach-

ing. During the spring of 1989, I attended six sessions of Kerry's teaching methods course. After the classes, we discussed what she was learning and focused on her concerns about student teaching.

The methods course took 5 weeks of the term; the remaining 10 weeks were devoted to observations of student teaching. The postobservational interviews were open-ended, fueled by an initial set of questions: What happened in the period? What were you thinking when...? Why did you act in that way? What alternatives might you have had? Kerry also projected her future intentions to act: What will you do? What might happen if...? The purposes of the interviews were (a) to enable Kerry to think carefully about what had transpired in order to improve her teaching and (b) to enable me to examine Kerry's inquiries about classroom interactions. All interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed verbatim.

Final personal interviews were held with Kerry, her university supervisors, and her cooperating teacher. Kerry recounted how she felt about the student teaching experience and what she had learned from it. The supervisors looked back on their own experiences as novice teachers and commented on Kerry's actions in response to classroom problems that arose during the term.

Documents comprised the participant's biographical data (her college records and an auto-biographical statement), her written goals for student teaching, a syllabus and other materials from the teaching methods course, and her personal journal (a university requirement for student teachers). Kerry permitted me to read all of these materials.

I used several coding systems to analyze the data. Initially I developed a set of codes relating to Kerry's forms of inquiry in the classroom with three main categories and about 40 subcategories, a number far too unwieldy for clear analysis. After determining that caring and controlling were central to Kerry's intentions and actions, I settled on a much simpler set of codes. I recoded the data identifying Kerry's intentions and actions in the process of establishing relationships with students. I then chose 12 lengthy interview segments that

seemed most representative of how Kerry enacted caring and controlling and of how she inquired about her actions. After the final re-coding of the selected segments, I wrote a profile of Kerry's intentions and actions of caring and controlling. The profile included incidents or issues that she addressed in multiple data sources. I noted frequent phrases, strongly worded imagery, and responses that seemed to contradict or challenge prior statements. Recurrent themes within and across profiles, phrased as much as possible in her language, formed the foundation for inferential interpretations of data.

Kerry's Intentions and Actions

After analyzing data from my study, I concluded that Kerry enacted caring in three key ways: by being real and spontaneous, by establishing personal relationships with students in and out of class, and by altering the curriculum and the learning environment to keep students engaged in learning. These categories emerged from my interpretations of data as I searched for the meaning of Kerry's responses to classroom interactions. The categories represent a schema for thinking about the intentions and actions of caring, not a reified structure. After discussing Kerry's intentions and actions, I will further explain these categories and analyze their connection with Noddings's (1984, 1986) ideas on caring.

How Kerry Defined Caring and Controlling

In this section I introduce Kerry through a brief biography and describe her intentions—before student teaching—to care and to control. Then I explore the conflicts Kerry experienced while teaching.

Intending to Care

Kerry was 21 when I met her. She had spent her precollege years in a large city and had attended schools in a largely affluent area of town. Kerry was European-American. Her mother was a long-time kindergarten teacher, and her father edited an educational publication, so she had grown up hearing about educational issues. She

was quite aware of the influences on her decision to teach. "My whole family knew that's where I should go [into teaching]. Subconsciously, I have thought about it for a long time. I love teaching" (10/11).

Before student teaching, Kerry thought of teachers as persons who cared about students and who in turn were respected and cared about. She provided examples of how a favorite professor manifested caring.

Kerry: She [an English professor] shows interest in students outside of class. She's just so human. It is easier for students to relate to teachers who don't put up fronts....She's so fair; she hasn't picked out a favorite. Nobody's ever given a wrong answer in there. She's not intimidating, and she has a desire to learn from us.

Researcher: How would you act in the classroom, if you were teaching now?

Kerry: I care a lot. I wouldn't be intimidating, and I would learn from the kids. I could do these things in the classroom right now. With practice, and lots of planning. (10/13)

This teacher exhibited caring by trying to know students outside of class time. She acted human and did not "put up fronts." Caring was also reflected in her willingness to trust spontaneous actions, albeit the spontaneity had to be thoughtful. Kerry felt a need to make well-reasoned decisions while teaching: "[One must be] able to know when that track, that outline, is not going the right way. Then you're able to think on your feet and decide "Hey, this isn't doing it! What can I do, right now?" (11/28). This ability to break from routines, to get off the track, and determine what to do, right now was crucial to her concept of good teaching.

Kerry also cared about the process of student learning. Being a good teacher meant not intimidating students and learning from them in a reciprocal relationship. She expressed her intentions by juxtaposing "being real" and "being intellectual."

Researcher: Why teach middle grades?

Kerry: Because I had two of the most wonderful teachers. They would fit in here [the university]. Really caring. It takes more to be real, not just intellectual....To care more about kids than what they learn, sometimes. If they learn how to study, how to deal with things at home, then I'll feel really good about my job, and in the process, if I can teach them a lot, that'll be icing on the cake. It's not necessarily what you teach them, but how you teach them. You're a role model. (10/27)

Kerry equated caring for students with being real and with enabling students to handle out-of-school problems or develop long-term skills. Notice that content is characterized as "the icing on the cake." Kerry expressed misgivings about her command of the language arts content, so in a sense she was sidestepping the issue of subject matter knowledge by concentrating on process. She understood that caring would be a problem:

You've always heard that it's easier to, yeah, that you should start off being strict and then be able to slacken off. But I just want to run in and have them all love me the first day, and I know what's gonna happen. I'll say, "Well, you can talk and jump around. Do you like me?"...Then halfway through the semester I'll be able to create no order. (11/28)

This passage dealt with the conflict between establishing care and control. Kerry wanted to love the students and to be loved in return. Caring was for her a reciprocal endeavor. She foresaw a possible conflict with two kinds of control: control over student behavior (maintaining "order") and self-control (not "getting out of hand myself"). Kerry considered the nature of self-control:

I don't think we should get so caught up in evaluating every decision we make, every instant or everything that comes up, because you can't be creative. You lose your continuity. But at the same time, I know for me it will be very valuable to think at all times. [All laugh.] If you try to

teach a lesson in a way that offends a race, or if you sputter out something that might offend someone that doesn't have a lot of money, I mean in that case I don't think you can think too little. (11/28)

For Kerry spontaneity was a part of being real, a sign of caring about students, but sometimes spontaneous action might result in insufficient self-control. In this sense "thinking on your feet," a reflective image of self-control, embodied caring for students.

Enacting Caring and Controlling

Kerry's proclivity to spontaneity sometimes did not jibe with the demands of responding to a classroom full of students. Initially, Kerry used the phrase "losing it" to describe incidents in which she was "having fun" with the students. She offered the following account of an early class session where she lost it.

Kerry: Today I lost it. I mean, it was Friday. I was silly; they were silly. We had a blast. They probably didn't have enough time-on-task, but Ms. ___ [the cooperating teacher] wasn't in the room, and we had a good time, and they did do stuff.

Researcher: When you say you "lost it," what do you mean?

Kerry: Well, I was giggling, and they were giggling, and we were having fun. When I told them they needed to, I said, "Okay, we've all got to calm down now." I said, "We're all getting out of hand; I know it's Friday, but we need to get some stuff done."

It was as if Kerry were playing at being a teacher, the sort of teacher she would want to be, while the cooperating teacher was away. She continued:

We were just all being silly, and I'm glad Ms. ___ wasn't there....To me, sixth graders that can work independently for an entire week and not blow it, that's good. They deserve to be able to—I mean, we turned out the lights at the beginning, and all

took 10 seconds and a big breath, and they thought that was funny. We calmed down, and I left the lights on dim so they could manage to stay a little bit under control, and we opened the doors. (3/17)

Kerry "lost it" and then tried to alter the environmental conditions to enhance the possibility of student self-control. She talked often about "noise," "commotion," and other aspects of student behavior that she felt compelled to control. Kerry acted to control by rearranging the room, by trying out a system of penalties that included detentions, by nonverbal signals such as flicking the lights to get attention, by attaching grades to group activities, and by keeping students engaged in activities.

"Losing it" also had a more negative connotation related to loss of control over emotions. No matter how students behaved, Kerry aimed for self-control, which she believed was related to classroom order.

Kerry: I don't want to yell, and I find myself raising my voice so I can hear. So I try—when I tried it second period it didn't work today; sometimes it does—just being quiet [speaks quietly]. And sitting down, or—I sat down one time second period....

Researcher: Is that what you do with those kids when you feel like you're getting annoyed? Do you try to stop yourself, or slow yourself down?

Kerry: If they're really causing a problem, I try to be quiet, but it's for me. It calms me down, and some classes, it calms them down, too, to just be quiet. Because there's some kids in each class that'll get annoyed enough with the rest of the class. They'll say, "Shh-shh, be quiet. Ms. K's tuned [upset]." (3/11)

Kerry's efforts to calm down were in effect a sort of meditation; the intention was to quiet herself down to avoid responding out of anger. For Kerry, being herself and self-control were

linked.

Kerry also persistently tried to enact caring by engaging students in discussions and by taking into account student interests. She tried group work on several occasions, held ongoing discussions about current events, and built lessons around topics that she believed would interest young adolescent students. Regarding the purpose of the class, Kerry several times encouraged students to "make connections to your own life" (5/3), a theme carried over from preteaching statements. It was unclear whether she had developed a plan to help students make these connections.

Early in her student teaching Kerry followed the path set in the fall in establishing personal relationships with students. She focused on individual students, making personal reciprocal connections. For example, personal affection ("liking him") initiated her interest in helping Kevin, a seemingly bewildered student. She expressed her intentions:

Kerry: [Kevin would] never turn in a homework assignment. He's failed everything,...but I've just taken a liking to him. There's nothing to like about him, except that he looks like he's in second grade, and he should be in sixth. And he's very innocent. I mean, he's kind of just dingy. He doesn't know, but I mean the little kid is dear, because he's little, and I like little ones, and...anyway, so I decided—self-consciously I didn't know this—that he was gonna be my...

Researcher: Project?

Kerry: My project. And for some reason he walked into class, I guess it was Monday, and said something about "Got any homework, Ms. ___?" He walked on through. And I said, "Kevin, Kevin, are you gonna study for your test tonight?" Because they have a little grammar test, and he went running back to his locker, and he found his grammar book. I said, "Do you have your notes on the sentence patterns?" "Oh, I didn't take no notes on the sentence patterns." [She imitates Kevin's voice.] And I said, "Kevin, study the pages you did for homework." "I didn't do no home-

work." I was like "Right." I said, "Kevin, just take your book home. At least you can study *it*." He made an 85....He just sailed through everything. I mean, 85 on the grammar test. I have never been so excited. I ran and got him out of science to tell him he made an 85, because I was so excited.

Kerry had not made a reflective judgment or a plan that this was the best of several possible actions, but she decided to make Kevin feel good about himself. She attributed the best possible motives to his actions, even while she believed she was challenging him to become a better student. In Noddings (1984) terms, Kerry wanted to confirm Kevin.

Kerry saw a conflict between her desire to know students personally and her efforts to control. She worried about "being mean" and was unwilling to change her informal approach to classroom interactions with students. At the same time she experimented with ways to control the behavior of several students whom she perceived as disruptive:

In class I've been trying to joke around and make it light-hearted, but if they can't deal with it, if they get out of hand, I guess I'll try to be firm, and if they don't get it, I make an example of one of them, and I haven't had a problem after that. I mean I keep hearing the little theory about you've gotta be mean at the beginning, and you've gotta be terrible and then lessen, lighten up. And that's probably true and I'm probably gonna get slapped in my face again. But I haven't lost them yet. (3/17)

She recognized that there were possible problems associated with her approach—"trying to joke around and make it lighthearted." Kerry depended on her personal relationships with students to help in controlling, and she believed for a time that it worked. Later in the term she did lose it; she got angry and acted mean, according to her own standard. She defined the difficulty as being "too nice" at first. Kerry felt troubled bby her lack of self-control and by the constant efforts to maintain calm. The seas ran rough.

Kerry: I guess that's why I'm so frustrated now:

because I'm not acting the way I want to act in the classroom.

Researcher: Why is that? Why aren't you acting the way you want to act?

Kerry: I think I'm fed up partially...I'm tired of people coming up to me and pestering me about things they need to make up or work they need to do. I'm tired of the noise they make. I'm fed up with it. I'm very, very tired of the way fifth period treats me as a person. Maybe that's my big theme. I want to treat them as people and I want them to treat me back with respect and I haven't gotten it. Instead of taking an extra grip and maybe a new step, I've just gotten the "wash my hands of it" attitude. I've only got 4 more days left. (5/3)

She wished she had been "firm" from the start, because she believed the consequence of being nice was to end up being mean. In the final personal interview Kerry expressed sadness at the thought of leaving her students—this only 6 days after her "wash-my-hands-of-it" comments that exhibited real anger and frustration about her lack of control in fifth period. She took photographs of all her classes and told them how "dear" they were to her. Kerry certainly had remaining uncertainties about how to care as a teacher and as an adult, yet her last vow that she would "not become cynical" reflected a commitment to connecting caring and controlling in her own way.

Understanding Caring and Controlling

Teacher educators and prospective teachers have a responsibility to examine the relationship of caring and controlling in classrooms. This requires that we first understand the nature of caring and the tensions between caring and controlling. In this section of the article I summarize how Kerry expressed caring and examine the tensions Kerry experienced. The tensions of student teaching were exacerbated by constraints on her efforts to care, so I provide examples of temporal, spatial, social, and societal structures that hindered Kerry's actions.

How Kerry Expressed Caring

I summarized Kerry's efforts to care by using three categories: being herself, establishing personal relationships, and altering the environment and curriculum to keep students engaged in learning. Each category represents a kind of caring. In being herself, caring is enacted through conscious attempts to be an exemplary person. Establishing personal relationships is concerned with knowing and respecting the student as a person and being known and respected in return. Developing an environment and curriculum for learning takes place during a teacher's work with the curriculum, which may occur in a classroom full of students or while planning in private for an upcoming class.

Let me note the relationship between this schema and Noddings's (1984) framework. Being real is related to the modeling that Noddings described, as it best represents the presentation of oneself. Establishing personal relationships and an environment and curriculum for learning incorporates Noddings's notions of dialogue, practice, and confirmation, which are means of caring that occur during interpersonal and curricular encounters. For example, Kerry tried to establish relationships through dialogue with students both inside and outside class, through the practice of reciprocal acts of care, and through her confirmation of students such as Kevin. Engaging students in learning is accomplished through dialogue about the ideas and the information that constitute the content and through the practice of encouraging wide-ranging questioning about issues being examined.

The Tensions of Caring and Controlling

Kerry experienced serious tensions between wanting to care and hoping to control. According to her initial ethic of care, one should present oneself honestly and openly to others. She spoke of the importance of reciprocal relations. She had intended to "be real" and found this aspect of caring to be quite difficult in the press of student teaching. Kerry fought not to seem "mean" when she meant to be "nice." When she presented herself as caring and spontaneous and students

took advantage of her by getting out of control, she tried to maintain her desire to be real. Spontaneity gave way in part to planning for more complex group interactions and to more structured attempts to control misbehavior.

Kerry thought that her relationships with students were helpful when trying to control students in the classroom, but one had to be wary of letting relationships interfere with the need for fairness and control. Students would note quickly any evidence of favoritism, so students' social expectations affected Kerry's decisions in the classroom. Kerry wanted to control herself and the physical and social environment so that her students could learn. The trick was how to do that without closely circumscribing students' experiences.

Kerry's attempts to engage students in learning also involved tensions with control. According to Berman (1987), knowing and caring are related. Teachers and students ought to be engaged in a shared construction of knowledge, which is marked by reciprocal listening and questioning, along with ongoing dialogue about the meaning of the curricular activities and materials. The prerequisite for caring is a teacher's eagerness to learn from students and a willingness to explore the topics under discussion.

This kind of caring is difficult to enact. McNeil (1986) found a connection between the ambiguities of teaching and teachers' tendencies to control curriculum. Teachers in her study wanted to control students because they were uncertain about their own content knowledge and about the consequences of innovative instructional strategies on student behavior. The teachers controlled course content by omitting controversial issues, omitting content requiring in-depth treatment, rarely asking students to add their ideas to the lesson, and reducing complicated topics to lists of terms and facts. McNeil asserted that this teaching strategy was designed to get one through the content and maintain control without asking too much of students.

McNeil attributed the teachers' use of this strategy to a choice of social control over educational goals. It might also be conceived of as a choice of

controlling over caring. The other two student teachers in my study tightly controlled the content of their classes, solicited few questions from students, and circumscribed the questions they asked students. They chose not to challenge the cooperating teacher's system and rarely questioned the relevance or value of the content. Their handling of content conflicted with several aspects of caring: to engage students in considering complex issues and to include students' ideas and experiences in the shaping of the curriculum. Caring was limited to the given classroom curriculum.

For Kerry, caring included considering the relevance and challenge of the content to students' needs. She tried to gear discussions to students' interests. She wanted them to learn how to study and to think for themselves. Kerry also spoke about "learning from the students," but her interpretation of caring was shallow. She often judged curriculum in terms of whether students were having fun—certainly a narrow conception of learning. Her creative efforts centered on choosing interesting teaching strategies more than on expanding her knowledge of the subject, though she did make an effort to learn more about certain subjects in which she felt particularly weak. There was an evident gap between her content knowledge and her earnest desire to be an innovative and thought-provoking teacher. .

Constraints on Caring and Controlling

Kerry's experiences as a student teacher demonstrate the need to conceive of teacher socialization as a negotiation and not as a reproduction of institutional roles. In classroom social encounters, "individual intentions do matter (at least during student teaching), and the classroom actions of student teachers are a result of a continual interplay between the intentions of individuals and institutional constraints" (Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984, p. 34).

Kerry intended to balance care and control. Her need to gain control conflicted with her desire to care by establishing relationships with students. The conditions of student teaching often

worked against the resolution of that conflict: "The constraints of student teaching [do] not allow for the construction of a personal classroom reality by the participants" (Tardif, 1985, p. 143). Kerry's caring was limited by the university's structuring of her teaching experiences, by school and societal structures, and by the responses of students.

The manner in which universities and cooperating teachers structure student teaching contributes to a student teacher's lack of power to care and control. Four structures interfered with Kerry's effort to resolve the conflict between caring and controlling: temporal structures, spatial structures, social structures within the university and school, and societal structures. Teachers create their own routines of action and structure the year in terms of units or weekly plans, which may prove helpful for their teaching. These routines and long-range planning structures are difficult for student teachers to initiate. To make this point, I will provide concrete examples of structures that Kerry found constraining.

Temporal structures. Temporal structures refer to allocations or divisions of time that affect teaching. For student teachers a constraining factor is the time spent observing and teaching. Kerry took three semesters of education courses that required little observation of classrooms. Her school of education experience culminated in a semester that combined a course on teaching methods and student teaching. She attended an interdisciplinary university class on teaching in the middle grades for 5 weeks, during which she observed her cooperating teacher's class once a week. Then she observed, planned, and taught occasionally for 3 weeks, taught full-time for 6 weeks, and phased out in the final week. Kerry understood that her experience was inadequate to resolve certain tensions in teaching. (The university has since instituted a more field-based program.) Her assessment of her project to save Kevin indicated her understanding of the temporal structures that constrain caring. After taking extra time to help Kevin, she reconsidered her initial approach:

University Supervisor: Is there a problem in your

master plan to change Kevin's approach to class?

Kerry: Yes. In fact, I feel different this week than last. I'm backing away a bit from my master plan. I don't think in my short time here that I'll really reform Kevin. If I could just get him to write down assignments and bring his books to class, I'd be happy. (3/23)

In this brief account Kerry described one of the key conditions of student teaching. Student teachers are essentially visitors in a classroom. Master plans to reform a student's patterns of behavior often require long-term efforts and are not suited to the short-term conditions of student teaching.

Spatial constraints. The room in which student teachers work is not theirs; the spatial environment, like their time, is structured by others (the cooperating teachers). It is not surprising that student teachers worry about establishing care and control in an environment not of their making. The other two participants in my study accepted the given spatial structures, but Kerry did not. Over one weekend she decided that the way the room was arranged—with long rows of individual desks—was not conducive to students' communicating with one another or working on projects. The cooperating teacher was out of town, so on Monday she commandeered five large tables from a storage room. She began to put student work on the walls and to conceive of the room as hers in a sense that other student teachers did not. Much of the spatial structure stayed the same; it was a large room with plenty of wall space and numerous high windows, all of which lent it an open air that Kerry liked. She also used a time-out chair in the back. Its ready availability made it easier for her to deal with issues of control in the classroom, without having students stand in the hall or wander down to the vice-principal's office. She believed that control should be a classroom issue, not an administrative matter.

Social structures. Student teachers believe they have to live up to their supervisors' expectations. These expectations create school-level constraints on caring. I consider two social constraints: the cooperating teacher's curriculum and the university's evaluation system.

The cooperating teacher decided on the curriculum long before Kerry arrived at the school. She chose the literature books and the system of testing and review. Kerry did not believe she had the power to deviate markedly from the cooperating teacher's curriculum; she could only adapt the activities and introduce new ways to learn the mandated content. As it is commonly practiced, student teaching constrains the caring of student teachers by handing them a predetermined curriculum.

The evaluation system for student teaching put a major constraint on caring and controlling. In Kerry's case, a university supervisor observed and conferred with her weekly, and during the term the cooperating teacher held many informal conversations with Kerry. For the conferences and final evaluation, the supervisor and the cooperating teacher used an instrument focused on behavioral competencies. Student teaching was graded pass/fail on university transcripts. However, the final evaluation of teaching competency consisted of a 5-point scale ranging from outstanding to failing. Kerry was rated outstanding on this informal scale.

Although the student teachers sometimes helped set the agendas of postobservational conferences, they knew that the final evaluation was out of their hands. Even a risk taker like Kerry understood that she had to please the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor, who together arrived at a final rating on the 5-point scale. Acting spontaneously or attempting new activities runs the risk of students' getting out of control, and student teachers are well aware that classroom control is a major facet of their evaluation by others. They are vulnerable if they assert their power to develop different forms of discipline or to institute alternative rules, because they are not the true authority in the classroom.

In spite of the constraints she faced, Kerry was gradually able to gain more authority. Her cooperating teacher was supportive, and because she was moving from the state at the end of the year, she was frequently absent. Kerry was fortunate because she mainly had to please the university supervisor. This supervisor was encouraging when

Kerry enacted caring by experimenting with new methods, by injecting innovative content into a lesson, or by reflecting on her personal relationships with students. Still, the final conference centered mainly on the supervisors' analyses; Kerry's thoughts on the experience were not part of the summative evaluation.

Societal structures. Societally structured constraints also interfere with student teachers' ability to care. One of the most common is the structuring of students by ability groups (i.e., tracking). I call it societal because tracking represents a widespread assumption, largely unchallenged until recently, that homogeneous grouping fosters academic achievement. Kerry wanted to care by maintaining high expectations of students' behavior and academic performance. She had seen how the tracking system in her school relegated certain students to a prescribed curriculum and lockstep teaching methods, along with a set of teacher expectations that influenced behavior. The cooperating teacher spoke of students as "basics" and "averages" and "gifteds," designations that carried academic and behavioral assumptions. Initially Kerry had parroted the comments of the cooperating teacher, both during the interviews and in her journal, but by the end of the term she pondered the disadvantages of tracking. In the final group interview, Kerry discussed how she felt about the tracked groups of students. She had taught average and gifted classes. Here was her account of dealing with average students' needs:

Kerry: See, first of all, you don't do like I feel the teachers at my school do, where you break them off as—you've got four-level classes in language arts, anyway. And you say, "The advanced and the AG kids will do this, and the basic and average kids will do this." The average kids don't need to be doing basic work. If anything they need to be doing what the advanced kids are doing and just altering the way you teach it, not changing your whole curriculum and giving them the basic stuff so they can go out there and they're never challenged.

Researcher: So what do we do with these average kids?

Kerry: I don't know, because they're the ones I have the trouble with, discipline wise. Like in the beginning, no matter what kind of teacher you are, you have to teach them how to be a good student. Teach them study skills or be very, very structured with them. Don't give them a way that they can be screw-offs, and then hold to it, and then, when they've got that part down, they obviously now ought to be able to do the fun stuff that the advanced kids get to do. (5/3)

Kerry believed that she should start out with control and demonstrate caring by teaching study skills to students. This differed from her ideas at the beginning of the term. Caring and controlling now had conditions: How they were enacted depended on how students were grouped. Kerry was not ready to challenge the tracking system, but she was willing to experiment with various classroom groupings and to reconsider some of her assumptions about students' needs. Kerry negotiated a thicket of acknowledged and unacknowledged constraints on her caring and controlling, yet she wanted to reconcile the need to control individuals in a large group setting with her need to be liked and to care for students.

The Inevitability of Tensions between Caring and Controlling

Tensions between caring and controlling are endemic to teaching. Teacher educators can encourage student teachers to seek the quick cure—discipline techniques with promises of control or tangible reward systems to monitor group work, but, as caring teacher educators, we should not protect student teachers from feeling the pain of learning the limits of caring. Wilson (1990) reminded her education students that teaching well is hard work that entails careful examination of actions and beliefs. Floden and Clark (1988) have described some of the inevitable uncertainties teachers face concerning what they know and how they ought to act. "Uncertainties of action are inevitable because teaching involves essential tensions—striving for one end requires giving up on others (at least for the moment)—so that no choice of action will be clearly preferable" (p. 507). Teacher educators should create a supportive

environment in which student teachers can understand and enact caring and controlling in a manner that establishes legitimate authority.

Understanding Legitimate Authority

Teacher educators and prospective teachers have an ethical responsibility to understand what constitutes legitimate authority in teaching. Such authority is predicated on the transformation of control through ethical caring.

Kerry was not different from other student teachers. She wanted to establish and maintain authority. Authority is essentially a grant to exercise power (Giddens, 1979), and Kerry definitely wanted more power to determine the course of her class. I understood that issues of authority and of the constitution of legitimate authority were central to Kerry's student teaching experiences only after analyzing the data and writing an earlier paper (McLaughlin, in press). From my analysis of Kerry's intentions and actions and the findings of other studies, three conclusions about the nature of legitimate authority seem warranted:

1. *Legitimate authority derives from personal as well as positional relationships with students that are founded on a balance of caring and controlling.* Goodman (1988) examined the professional perspectives of 12 student teachers in an elementary education program. Their concerns about caring and controlling were similar to Kerry's. Most of the student teachers in Goodman's study worked to establish "institutional authority," the authority attached to one's role or position. To that end, they used the school's discipline system and tended to identify particular children as the problem. A small group of student teachers wanted to base their personal authority on relationships with individual children. These student teachers aimed to be both friend and teacher. In spite of the difficulties in balancing the personal and the positional, some of them held to that aim throughout student teaching, as did Kerry in my study and the student teachers in Prillaman's (1988) study.

Caring and controlling are manifested in the establishment of personal and positional relationships. Some educators have recognized and stud-

ied the dynamics of personal relationships and social positions. Fuller (1969) asserted that novice teachers enter student teaching with an emphasis on concerns about self, such as their personal relations with students. As student teachers, the novices move through stages that lead to a greater concern with teaching tasks and eventually with student academic learning. Fuller assumed that preoccupation with personal relationships conflicts with the demands of one's position as teacher (see Buchmann, 1989, for an analysis of this conflict).

Other researchers (Caruso, 1977; Walberg, 1968) have examined the conflict between the personal and the positional. According to Moon, Niemeyer, and Karls (1989), student teachers have personal and professional agendas before and during their field experiences. Initially, much of their language is concerned with self-image and feelings about the role of a teacher. They are primarily concerned with building personal relationships. As student teachers gain more confidence in dealing with ambiguity, they begin to use a "professional language" in which "the focus seems more role oriented than personal" (p. 20).

In previous developmental and socialization studies, researchers have often omitted the complex factor of how student teachers exercise the power to care as they try to control classroom events. Caring and controlling are inextricably part of one's authority and identity as a person and as a teacher. Buchmann's notions that people undergo a "transformation from person to teacher" (1986, p. 59) and that roles are "parts people play in society and do not describe individuals" (p. 57) are off the mark. When ethical caring is enacted, the teacher is herself while engaging in dialogue, practicing caring, and confirming students. She does so within interpersonal and curricular relationships. We ought to be concerned not with static roles that betray a functionalist perspective but with fluid positions that evolve out of the interactions between individual intentions and one's interpretations of temporal/spatial and social structures.

2. Legitimate authority is conferred and assumed. Illegitimate authority relies on directives

from an assumed position of power without seeking the conferral of authority from others, without reciprocal caring. Kerry had begun student teaching by talking about the interrelatedness of caring and self-control:

I think they sense my basis for the way I try to act is, if I can prove to them that I'm human, that I'll respect them if they respect me, and if there's that ongoing thing, then we're fine. And we can joke; we can play. But when it's time to quit, we both quit. (3/17)

In the end Kerry still wanted mutual respect and mutual restraint (self-control) on everyone's part. Authority is legitimated when it is conferred by students through their reciprocal caring and respect for a teacher. Authority is not only conferred by students; it is also assumed by a teacher. Kerry assumed the authority to alter the environmental arrangements in the classroom, to try out new teaching strategies, and to establish personal relationships with the students.

3. Legitimate authority is predicated on the transformation of control by caring and of caring by control. Student teachers live through a difficult process of socialization. The student teachers' moment-by-moment struggles to care and control involve the exercise of authority, and the student teachers' actions are constrained by temporal/spatial and social structures to which they respond. In this process of negotiated socialization, caring and controlling are mutually transformed. Conflict between caring and controlling does not signal that they are separate or opposed. Rather, they are fundamentally connected. Bowers and Flinders (1990) phrased it neatly: "Control and caring are not opposing terms; but the form of control is transformed by the presence of care" (p. 15).

Ethical control entails establishing caring relationships whose limits are mutually negotiated. Control should not be based on "unilateral decision making about classroom rules or the use of behavioral reinforcement" (Bowers & Flinders, 1990, p. 127). Assertive discipline, classroom management, and other technical systems of control fail to recognize the students' role in conferring authority through negotiation.

Control without caring limits the teacher's understanding of a student's motivations for learning or not learning and can stifle student-generated questions or ideas that challenge the textbook and teacher talk. The purposes and meanings of control are transformed by caring and caring is transformed by control. Ethical caring requires boundaries on being oneself, on the intensity of interpersonal relationships with students, and on dialogue with students. Ethical caring demands self-control. A teacher must be controlled enough not to allow emotional difficulties or interpersonal relationships with some students or a reliance on spontaneity to interfere with students' opportunity to learn. Buchmann (1986) pointed out the weakness of teachers relying solely on personal reasons when analyzing what occurs in the classroom. Being oneself is not the aim of teaching, and we need not elevate person over teacher or predilection over principle.

I earlier noted Noddings's (1986) idea of fidelity in caring, which emphasizes the "welfare of the other and that of the relation" (p. 497). Fidelity depends on the teachers' control of the spatial/temporal environment and on responses to social structures that shape relationships in the classroom. Ethical caring, the bedrock of fidelity, requires that teachers exert some control over the environment, not allowing a few students to dominate or disrupt classroom interactions. Kerry clearly cared enough to want power to control many structural aspects of teaching. Empowering students includes helping them set limits and establishing the right classroom atmosphere by controlling group interactions to the extent that positive social interactions can occur.

The Personal and the Positional in Teacher Education Reform

Teacher educators who are thinking about reform should examine the nature of their own caring and controlling with prospective teachers. Along with discussions of programs and structures that shed light on the positional aspects of teaching, teacher educators are obliged to examine the personal aspects of learning to teach. How can

teacher educators model caring and controlling? How can they engage prospective teachers in a study of legitimate authority? What are the constraints in program structures and university classrooms and student teaching sites that block the chance for novices to redefine themselves as person and as teacher? Confirming student teachers means helping them assume responsibility for themselves and their relationships with students. It also means challenging ourselves to do the same.

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